RISE/RISEN

A Coda **by Declan May**

After the Horde of Travesties, beyond the Nightmare Childe,

When a rose caught in a Moment,

Bloomed ferocious genocide.

The warrior fades and weakens, loosens heavy bandolier,

Forgets his day as the doctor,

Now the Doctor, again, is near.

1. Here Comes Everybody.

tardisrun, past Event and Horizon's, from swerve of synchronicity to bend of bay, brings us by a chrono vortexia of recirculation back to Howling Canon and Environs.

Tea. Tea? The tangible tang on his tongue, tentative tender tastebud memory of tea.

I remember this, he thinks. Also: *I don't remember this*…

There were these three men, right? No. Two men. (No: *one*) A white wall, gallery, museum, a –

Three men. No: *more*. A girl. Strangely familiar (she was), but not yet. One girl? No. More…

A moment. *Give me a moment*. Just a moment. Think it through. (Daren't think it through.)

Force memory. Two women. "Don't steal that one…" (Clear, distinct and hazy. So, so long ago…) and "The man who regrets and the man who forgets. The moment is *me*." (a horticultural collection of *earthy* words: hybrids, cultivars and evergreens. Hawthorn, Cotoneaster, Exochordeae… *Rosacea*. A rose, held clamped and even, in a wolfish muzzle. A moment. Just a moment. A Moment…)

Jeter dans la gueule du loup…

What's that ? French ? *Is that what I am now? French?*

No. Tongue around the words. "*Jetty dawns la gul doo loo" Lancashire? (she was?) No. (I am) North of the Penines. North.*

Young. At any rate. Younger. How could everything..?

Just

Vanish

Loop back. Hair, chin, eyes. Holding console, ears…

Then it all comes. A horrific, clamouring epidemic of images, sounds and memories. The barn. That hermitage, cold and empty save for…

The Moment.

He collapses, extinguished. Head colliding, expanding. Happening, culminating, emerging…

Here comes everything…

2. Missing Adventures.

Hanging in the vortex. Spinning on its axis within the howling canon escarpment –

Falling out of the vortex, jolting and juddering, tumbling through the atmosphere, hurtling down, cut loose –

The TARDIS, battered blue blur 'gainst the pale whispering sky, spins and shudders, engines vworping in ragged asthmatic urgency, Police Box lantern blinking its phosphorous tocsin as it crashes towards the planetary surface –

Meanwhile, its pilot lays slumped on the floor. A young man in old clothes, face twisted in a cruel pastiche of tranquil sleep. Cruel? For this man isn't sleeping.

When it came, it came violently. Past bouts of amnesia seemed to last longer. But that would've been far too kind. And, even as this tempest of shifting memories and shunted timelines bombard him, he's smart enough to know that kindness is the last thing that'll be allowed to him now.

So. Taking stock: The barn, the button, the Moment. An old man alone (alone?) before the switch, the trigger, the big red reset that will end the Time

War, Time Lords and Daleks, save the universe and stop the never-ending, infinite downward spiral towards madness …

The War. The Warrior. The Man in the Bandolier, Foreman, the Postman, the Prisoner, the killer …

(The Eighth, dying. That brutal elixir burning the Doctor out of himself… The Eight Minute War, the camps, the grotesque, perverted resurrection of Rassilon, the War Chief, the Chronosmiths, Jenny Shirt, Cinder, the murders, the murders, the murders … the Fall Of Arcadia

The man in the sandshoes, the boy in the bow-tie, the Moment -)

Hands that hesitated (hands? How many?), haver and hover over the device. Resolute, determined, weary –

How many children on Gallifrey?

Hesitation. We … *I* pressed the button. I ended it. It was me, alone. In that moment, the Moment and I were as one and it was I who did it. Killed every last one of them. Every single stinking Dalek and *every Time Lord too* …

The Doctor jolts back into consciousness. Regains the vertical. Hands (new hands…) steady on the console, fingers (new fingers …) busying over buttons, flipping levers, steadying the TARDIS, pushing her up, up, up and into

Space.

3. No More.

The TARDIS is old. She's always been old. She was born old. The Doctor wanders through her corridors with no destination in mind.

It's the Gap that bothers him. The hole. The long weekend, the wilderness years, the morning after… From the barn, from the Moment, to here. To now. And the guilt.

The guilt, the anger … *I had no desire to survive that*. But, it would seem, he has. And, to his surprise, he's the Doctor again. The name lost, he thought, forever, centuries ago on Karn before the … before he -

The Doctor. In the TARDIS. Home. The only home he has left now. Each time he turns a corner, however deep he travels into the belly of the ship, the walls shift and reform around him. Rebuilding. And with every stride, each angry step, the Warrior falls away and the Doctor blooms *like a rose*.

The tea – that mouthful of sugary tea – fading now like the memory of how it came to be there in the first place.

"Fantastic," he calls out, new vowels bitter and ironic echo and reverberate. "I wiped them out, watched them burn then popped-off in my TARDIS and had a cuppa!"

He laughs then. A sound that is hollow and caustic against the holocaust *so clear* in his mind. Hours ago? Days? Weeks? *What did I do next?*

There's always something we don't know…

(One should certainly hope so)

A tsunami of words and images from a place he can't quite put his finger on.

Failed. Doing the right thing.

(I won't remember this, will I?)

"No more," he says. Quieter now, shaking his head. "No more."

I am the Doctor again …

He opens a door. A room he hasn't visited in a long, long time. Rows upon rows of boxes, arranged on many levels; clothes from many planets and many times (most of which no longer exist …) and, without thinking, he lets the battered old jacket – heavy now on his shoulders – slide and crumple to the floor. The bandolier too (Cass …), letting it fall to the metal fretwork surface with a hefty thud. The sonic screwdriver rolls across the floor and stops at the base of a packing crate atop which a folded black leather jacket rests.

"An upgrade." he says. "Keep it simple."

He tears-off the last of the old man's clothes and, without pausing to pay too much heed to what he grabs from the pile, dresses quickly, the choices made through necessity …

The sinister cold toll of the Cloister Bell rings through the TARDIS, its icy plaintive chime reasserting some sort of order to the chaotic aftermath of … whatever this is. No time to lose. He's needed.

The Doctor (*Yes, I'm the Doctor*) runs at speed through the regenerating corridors of his ancient TARDIS, rushing towards the console room.

"No, no, no, no, no!" he shouts upon entering: the console room melting and moulding and modifying before his eyes. The white roundels fading from the walls, shafts of coral spearing through the chamber like shards of glass, the light fading and the console itself aflame …

"Not now!" he shouts, rushing over to the scanner. "Come on, just give me this. Give me a moment."

Onscreen, Earth. Steady gaze, watching the overlapping folds of data. Cardiff Bay… No. London. 2005 CE. A signal. A definite signal.

Nestene. He closes his eyes. He sees – a vicious, blood saturated memory – the Autons screaming, burning … the Nestene Consciousness calling out for help, its voice screeching through the burning universe. He'd tried to help them. He'd tried …

But they survived after all. And he knows what they'll want.

Earth. There's still Earth. And, perhaps, he can help them all. The humans, the Nestenes, the whole damn lot of them.

That settles it. Despite the heat, despite the fact his ship is in flames, despite the fact he's not entirely sure he knows what he is now, he is certain of his purpose and steadfast in his beliefs.

"The earth's in danger," he says. "And I'm the Doctor."

He throws the dematerialisation switch.

"Fantastic" he says as the TARDIS plunges earthbound, falling in flames towards a city he'd thought he'd never see again. "Absolutely fantastic."

Rise/Risen/Rose